

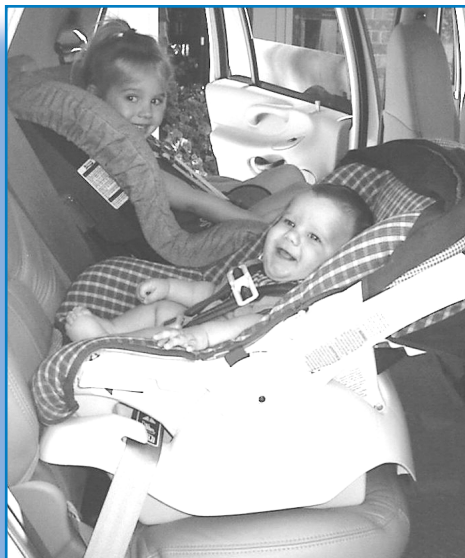


**KING COUNTY
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL
SERVICES**

SPRING 2004

SMART KIDS! SAFE KIDS! INJURY PREVENTION FUN

BUCKLE UP!



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Buckle Up! It's the Law. It sounds simple, doesn't it? But trying to figure out the right type of seat for the age and size of your child can be confusing. Properly buckling up can, and does, save lives. By taking time to learn what type of car- or booster-seat is best for your child, you can make a big difference in his or her safety when riding in a car whether it be a trip to the grocery store or a trip across the state.

Child safety seats and seatbelts have been proven to be effective in reducing the risk of death in a car crash. Yet more than half of the children under age fifteen killed in crashes in 2000 had not "buckled up". Those deaths may have been prevented if the children had been buckled safely in their car-seats or booster-seats or had been wearing a seatbelt. The studies show that proper use of child safety seats can reduce the risk of fatal injury in a crash by more than half. By taking a few minutes to make sure your

kids are properly buckled-up in the car you can dramatically increase their chances of surviving a car crash.

But just wearing a seatbelt or putting a child in a car-seat is not enough. Children who are restrained improperly are more likely to be injured in a crash. For example, children ages two to five who are placed in seatbelts rather than an appropriate car-seat or booster-seat are three-and-a-half times more likely to be significantly injured in a car crash. They are four times as likely to receive a head injury. Sadly, the studies also show that caregivers quit using safety seats for children after the age of three. One study showed that half of children between the ages of three and eight were not being placed in car-seats or booster-seats as they should have been.

Teach your children by setting a good example. Do you wear your seatbelt every time your ride in a car? What about the children in your care? The other day, a colleague of mine saw a large SUV full of young boys on their way to the baseball game. The driver had on her seatbelt, but all of the boys were loose and bouncing around the vehicle as they excitedly neared Safeco Field. Those boys should have been buckled-up for their own safety, the safety of the driver and for the other drivers on the road. Unrestrained children can distract the driver and cause crashes with tragic results.

Take the time to buckle-up. It's the law and it does save lives.

CHILD SAFETY SEAT INFO

BUCKLE UP! IT'S THE LAW BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS THE LAW?

WASHINGTON STATE SEAT BELT LAW SAYS:

- All vehicle occupants be properly restrained in all seating positions.
- The driver is responsible for properly securing all children under the age of 16.

WASHINGTON STATE CHILD RESTRAINT LAW SAYS:

- Infants to ride in rear-facing child car seats until they are 1 year old or weigh 20 pounds (which ever comes first);
- Children 20-40 pounds or are 1-4 years old (which ever comes first) to ride in a forward-facing child car seat with a harness;
- Children weighing 40-60 pounds or are 4-6 years old (which ever comes first) to ride in a booster seat in vehicles equipped with a lap and shoulder seat belt;
- Children weighing more than 60 pounds or are 6 years or older shall be restrained in either a booster seat or properly adjusted and fastened seat belt.
- The law also requires that everyone wear the seat belt correctly (e.g. the shoulder belt crosses the face or neck, is under the arm or behind the back, or the lap belt is across the stomach).

CAR SEAT SAFETY CHECKLIST

Toddlers

If your child is older than 1 and weighs between 20-40 pounds:

- S/He always rides in the back seat.
- S/He always rides in a car seat made for his/her age and weight.
- His/her car seat is buckled tight in the car and doesn't move more than an inch when you pull on it where the seat belt is attached to the car seat.
- S/He is snugly strapped in and you can fit only one finger under the strap.

Young Children

If your child is younger than 8 and weighs more than 40 pounds:

- S/He always rides in the back seat.
- S/he always rides in a booster seat. (a high back booster seat if your back seat doesn't have a head rest.
- You have shoulder belts in the back seat of the car, the lap harness is across the child's hips, not the tummy.
- The shoulder harness is across the child's shoulder, not the neck.
- The seat belt should be tight, comfortable and lie flat against the child.

RESOURCES

1-800-BUCKLUP or www.800buckleup.org

– all the information you could possibly need on child safety seats in Washington including car seat coupons and where to have a check-up on your child safety seat.

www.carsafekids.org

– information on car seat classes and where to get your car seat checked to see if it is properly installed.

www.keepkidshealthy.com

– click on Car Seats listed under the section titled Safety. Very useful Car Seat Ease of Use rating as well as other useful information.

